

Mr. Speaker, for 7 years following the Gulf War, Saddam claimed that he did not possess weapons of mass destruction, and for all 7 years, he was lying. Iraqis told inspectors they had no mustard agent and then they expressed profound shock when quantities of mustard gas were found. Iraq told inspectors they never had weaponized VX nerve agent and then feigned surprise when inspectors found weaponized VX nerve agent. We learned that Saddam Hussein had constructed elaborate concealment mechanisms. The Iraqi regime spent a decade working to ensure that prohibited weapons production was kept quiet. When the inspectors were kicked out of Iraq in 1998, the regime had failed to account for vast quantities of its weapons of mass destruction stockpiles.

So here is a question for the dissenters: Why would a regime without weapons of mass destruction manufacture the mobile laboratories that our troops and the U.N. inspectors found to make such weapons? And why would the numerous defectors, many with recent, first-hand knowledge of Iraq's WMD programs, have detailed elaborate production and concealment efforts? Were they all lying?

Mr. Speaker, Iraq is the size of California and the dirt is deep. There are many places for these weapons to have been hidden. I urge the press and the American people to be patient and let our troops do their jobs. There are still soldiers at risk fighting off violence. We know that these weapons existed and we know that the Iraqi government has never accounted for their destruction. That is what we do know.

BAKE SALES AND BUDGET CUTS— THE IMPACT OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

(Mr. ETHERIDGE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to explain the effects on our States of the administration's cut of the No Child Left Behind Act. The \$20 billion in education cuts could not come at a worse time as States scramble to close budget gaps and schools struggle to comply with the rigorous new law.

Across America, desperate measures are being taken. In Alabama, schools are being forced to raise class sizes. In Florida, two-thirds of the pre-kindergarten programs are being terminated. In Idaho, parents must raise money for teacher salaries through bake sales and auctions. In Illinois, they have laid off thousands of teachers and staff to increase class sizes and, in some schools, to nearly 40 students. Detroit plans to close 16 schools this month. In South Carolina, 2,000 teachers have been let go, and class sizes are up to 35 students.

This is just a sample of the consequences of the failure of the Federal Government to make good on its promises.

That is why I intend to introduce H.R. 2366, the Fully Fund the No Child Left Behind Act. Before we ask our schools to hold bake sales and our States to live with budget cuts, we should live up to our own budget cuts.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should honor its commitment to our students.

MEDICARE REFORM MEANS MODERNIZING HEALTH CARE FOR OUR SENIORS

(Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, last night we marked up the Medicare bill in the Committee on Ways and Means, and we are hoping to pass a comprehensive Medicare bill by the 4th of July recess. Just a few minutes ago, we heard a sample of some of the rhetoric we are going to hear from the other side, the distortion, the demagoguery.

There are three things we are trying to accomplish with Medicare reform which we accomplish in this bill: make Medicare fair for seniors across all of America in all States like my State of Wisconsin; modernize Medicare so that it is once again a comprehensive health care plan with prescription drug coverage; and number 3, and perhaps the most important part, recognize the fact that in 13 years, Medicare is going bankrupt and we need to pass reforms to make Medicare solvent for the baby boom generation.

What we are doing is protecting all of the rights seniors have in Medicare today, but expanding their choices of coverage so they have the same choices, like every Member of Congress has here in their own health plan and every other Federal employee.

We have to modernize Medicare. We have to make it fair for all of our constituents in all of our States, and we have to save this vital program for the baby boom generation, and that is what we are accomplishing.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1528, TAXPAYER PROTECTION AND IRS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 282 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 282

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 1528) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to protect taxpayers and ensure accountability of the Internal Revenue Service. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The amendment recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill,

modified by the amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. All points of order against the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill, as amended, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; (2) the further amendment printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules, if offered by Representative Rangel of New York or his designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, and shall be separately debatable for one hour equally divide and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 282 is a modified, closed rule waiving all points of order against the consideration of H.R. 1528, the Taxpayer Protection and IRS Accountability Act of 2003. The rule provides one hour of debate to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule also provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, as modified by the amendment printed in Part A of the Committee on Rules report accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The rule waives all points of order against the bill, as amended.

The rule further provides for consideration of the amendment printed in Part B of the report, if offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) or his designee, which shall be considered as read and shall be separately debatable for one hour, equally divided and controlled by a proponent and an opponent.

Finally, the rule waives all points of order against the amendment printed in Part B of the report and provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1528, as authored by my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to protect taxpayers and ensure accountability of the IRS. The bill would improve the efficiency of tax administration and increase the confidentiality of tax returns and related information.